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The Industrial Revolution.

BY PHILIP S. MOXOM.

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THE
INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION:

A SERMON

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THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION.

"Think not that I came to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword."—*Matt. 10 : 34.*

These are startling words from the lips of one whom prophet and sacred historian have united in naming the "Prince of Peace." What did Jesus mean? Did He mean that He came with the distinct purpose to stir up enmity and strife, and to turn men into Ishmaelites—every man with his hand against his neighbor? No. Yet He said deliberately that He came "to cast a sword in the earth." There are two thoughts that will help us to understand these words of Christ.

1. *The coming of Jesus into the world introduced into human society such elements and forces that commotion and strife were inevitable.*

His own relation to the ruling classes and the ruling ideas of His age was representative. He antagonized the traditions and the customs of the dominant classes. His ideas of religion were revolutionary. His every contact with the life of the time was solvent of established institutions. His teachings were a challenge to the law of "use and wont." They could persist only by a constant overcoming.

Strife, then, was inevitable. He did not strive nor cry. His method was silent, without observation and without advertisement. It was the method of the sower who casts his seed and leaves it to the nursing of sun and rain. The sphere of His per-

sonal activity was confined to Palestine, geographically an insignificant corner of Asia, and His public ministry covered little more than three years. He in no way filled the rôle of a political or social reformer, in the ordinary sense of that term. He did not openly attack evils in society and government. For example: Human slavery was practised in most cruel and revolting forms. Jesus said nothing about the abolition of slavery. The legal oppression of debtors was so great that the creditor (certainly in the days of the Roman Republic) might sell the debtor into hopeless bondage, or even take his life. Jesus urged no change in the laws. Liberty, civil and religious, was unknown and undreamed of among the masses, and the individual was valued merely as a factor in the state—a brick in the wall. Jesus proposed no reforms of government. Intemperance was a prevalent vice throughout the known world. Jesus made no suggestion of prohibitory law, and did not even inculcate total abstinence except inferentially. The people of every land were wrapped in grossest ignorance and superstition. Jesus said nothing about popular education. But the sayings of Jesus, and the crescent influence of Jesus, have abolished slavery from four-fifths of the world, have destroyed debtors' prisons, have made laws humane, have created the civil and religious liberty of modern Christendom, have made society temperate, and have diffused the light of culture among the millions. Jesus of Nazareth is re-creating the world. This work of renovation and reform in human society has been a continuous struggle, because the spiritual ideas and forces communicated by Jesus have worked through human agencies, and have faced continually the brute antagonisms of selfish and bestial life. The evolution of human society has gone on through strife and carnage and unceasing tumult. Truly, Jesus "cast a sword in the earth."

II. *Strife and commotion engendered by the teachings of Jesus have always worked for progress and peace. Through storm, as*

through sunshine, the world moves forward; for it is guided by a divine purpose, and human progress reveals the evolution of a divine thought.

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.

There are no contingencies or catastrophes to Providence. The study of history, in its large scope, is a discipline in faith. War even becomes benign to him whose vision is broad enough to take in the whole field. Social ferment, even when it rises into revolution, is not ever an unmixed evil. Often the ferment is the sign and promise of great good. Truth, like a soldier, carves her way to an enduring throne. Peace is born out of contention. The purposes of God, slowly worked out in human history, justify at last all the struggle and convulsion by which history is marked. There has been no great struggle which has not resulted in good. The Crusades depopulated Europe, but they checked the advance of Mohammedanism, and delayed the fall of Constantinople four hundred years; they developed commerce and civilization through the contact of strange races; and they hastened the destruction of feudalism. The French Revolution broke the spell of absolutism in government, and, despite the temporary reaction caused by its excesses, established the democratic sentiment and principle in Europe. Our own last war, bloody and costly as it was, is already seen to be worth all it cost. Out of the sanguinary and fratricidal struggle we have come a consolidated nation, with a higher appreciation of liberty, and a more assured and influential place among the nations of the earth. Christianity is a great agitator. *It creates ideals that breed discontent.* It wakens aspirations that move the hearts of men as the sea is moved by the moon. Every great social upheaval in modern times is due in some way to the teachings of Jesus Christ; and every advance toward a higher social and industrial and political life is due to influences which emanate from Him. He who "cast a sword into the earth" proves Himself at last the "Prince of Peace."

We are now in the midst of what seems to many a great social and industrial revolution. Men are in alarm, as though the foundations of human society and government were dissolving. They fear the collapse of our institutions and the disappearance of social order. But this revolution, like others, will reveal itself to be evolution—the rising of society into higher form, the transient instability that precedes a more stable equilibrium of social elements. God rules and guides. Providence does not rest on contingencies. Out of strife will come good to all. As the thunderstorm clears the atmosphere, so the events of the past few weeks and the weeks immediately before us will leave a clearer air in which society will breathe with increased health and vigor. Faith in God—that faith which works by love, which keeps the head clear and the judgment true and the heart calm—is the best practical philosophy. The timid and the doubtful are always expecting “the end of the world.” The careful study of history reveals this: that

(1) Discontent prevailing in the masses is a sign and result of increasing intelligence. Men must come to self-consciousness and rise to a perception of a better condition than the actual, before they will feel discontent or put forth any effort for improvement. Christianity, in promoting intelligence, promotes discontent. Often discontent is a mixed quality, having in it elements of mere bestial uneasiness and selfish passion. Thus there may seem to be individual exceptions to the principle I have stated; but these seeming exceptions do not invalidate the principle. All progress is the fruit of quickened intelligence by which something better than present circumstances is conceived; and with the perception of a possible better state rises the impulse to make the possible actual. Civilization is the product of gradually awakened needs rising into consciousness and so becoming wants. Discontent with the present continually pushes men on to larger attainment.

(2) Widespread revolt against social or political conditions is the result of a developing sentiment of justice and liberty. The Christian conception of the individual sooner or later makes every form of tyranny irksome and, by-and-by, intolerable. That conception destroyed feudalism, wrung *Magna Charta* from reluctant royalty, and inspired the Declaration of Independence. The masses of the people are not a kennel of hounds that must be whipped into subordination by self-appointed masters. Human progress is continuous, and involves the whole body of the people. God is no respecter of persons, and Christian history illustrates the decay of favoritism. The "divine right" of kings has gone into the limbo of outgrown ideas, and the divine right of aristocracy is going. Government passes steadily and surely into the hands of the many. Industrial organization, as well as political organization, is passing out of the control of the few into the control of the many. More and more it is becoming apparent that as government is to be *by* the many *for* the many, so industrial organization must be for the weal of the many—for the wage-earners as well as the wage-payers, for the operative as well as for the employer. Whatever prevents that will be overturned. Absolutism in government and caste in society are unconsciously perpetuated in the thoughts of men long after they have disappeared in form. Slavery is dead, serfdom is dead, feudalism is dead, but the attenuated spirit of slavery and feudalism still lingers in society. The sacredness of "use and wont" still exerts its spell in an enfeebled degree on our mental habit. But nothing is sacred except what is right, and nothing else will endure. Industrial organization is not absolute. Every advance in intelligence and morality necessitates modifications. Laws and customs that seem just to-day, to-morrow are seen to be defective, and the day after to-morrow change is no longer optional, but inevitable. Gladstone's thought for Ireland marks the point to which the whole tide of English opinion must rise. Revolutions never go

backward, because revolutions are stages in the great divine process of human evolution. There is always the element of experiment in social and political changes, but progress is by experiment. The untried must be attempted. Men make mistakes, but in the long run mistakes contribute to progress. Human passion and blindness rush into crime, and crime is expiated by bloodshed and delay of progress; but even crime teaches lessons that make wise. All experiences are educational. The folly of men brings scourging, and by-and-by through scourging comes the sobered mind and chastened purpose. The criminal is the ally of despotism and the foe of progress; but the criminal is the exception. Humanity is divinely led, and man grows from more to more through the shock of battle as surely as through the quietness of peace.

In the industrial revolt that we are passing through, there are evil and ominous elements. There are ignorance and demagogism and anarchic selfishness. But the revolution, as a whole, is not evil. The mass of the people is sound of heart. The great body of American workingmen is conservative and not anarchical. The present disturbance of industrial relations will result in good. It is not causeless. Right is not all on one side in this struggle. Selfishness, and not the Golden Rule, has largely determined industrial and commercial relations. Selfishness has crystallized into certain industrial maxims and customs. The principle of employers, with notable and noble exceptions, has been, *The most work for the least money*. The principle of workmen, with praiseworthy exceptions, has been, *The most money for the least work*. In these equally selfish principles you have the elements of an inevitable antagonism. While they prevail, society cannot have peace, and ought not to have peace. They produce a chronic state of social war and spoliation. But as Christ, in the realm of religious thought, is dissolving the bondage of outgrown dogmas, so Christ in the common life of men is dissolving the bondage of

arbitrary and outgrown industrial relations. A higher morality is struggling into being. Out of the strife is to come a better understanding of social and economic questions, and a more humane adjustment of relations between man and man. The wild vagaries of communism will disappear with the selfish maxims and exclusive customs of a commercial aristocracy. Men will learn that liberty is not absence of law, but free conformity to just law; that rights are the correlatives of duties; that whatever violates the moral sentiment works harm and only harm to all the people.

Some things, I believe, we shall learn. And the speed and thoroughness with which we learn them will depend on our fidelity to the highest conceptions of truth and righteousness which are given us by Jesus Christ.

(1) We must learn that *rights are not the exclusive property of privileged classes*. Rights belong to man independent of his particular circumstances. We are in the habit of talking much about "labor" and "capital," forgetting that "labor" and "capital" are abstractions. In a true view the possession of wealth or the want of wealth is incidental. "Capital" has no rights, but the man who owns capital *has* rights. "Labor" has no rights, but the man who has strength and skill to labor has rights. Behind the capital is *a man*. Behind the marketable labor is also *a man*. These men are brothers, having mutual rights and mutual obligations. The whole question of industrial economics has been put in a false light by the identification of the owner with what he has, and of the worker with what he does. Humanity is an element in the problem of which sufficient account has not been made. The workman, or "hand," as he is called, is of the same flesh and blood as the employer. They are children of the same God: they are under the same moral laws. The workman is not like coal and iron which the employer may burn up or wear out and then cast aside at his pleasure. On the other hand, the employer is not a legitimate subject of spoliation. As belonging to a common hu-

manity and bound by a common interest, the one can lawfully claim no rights which do not as much belong to the other.

For example, if merchants or manufacturers have a right to organize into corporations or "pools," to conserve and enlarge their gains, laboring men have an equal right to organize for the protection of their industry and the improvement of their condition. Combination, if it be a right at all, is just as impregnable a right on the one side as it is on the other. Many have been slow to admit this, but the admission must be made. In England the land-owners and manufacturers for many years refused to give labor organization any legal footing, or even permission to exist. Happily that day of selfish and partisan conservatism has passed. Let the laboring men organize. Through organization they will increase their intelligence and acquire the discipline of self-control. Their mistakes and misdeeds do not destroy their right. If at first they make very grave blunders, or even are led into positive wrong, the fair-minded man, while he reprobates crime by whomsoever committed, will remember that the workingmen have had some very evil examples. Who is not familiar with the fact that men of wealth devoid of sensitive conscience have created organizations for plundering the State or the nation? Who does not know of corporations or combinations that have corrupted legislatures and purchased courts and debauched or defeated the agents of public justice? Who is unacquainted with the practice by a certain class of capitalists of forcing bread and meat and coal up to fictitious and exorbitant prices at the expense of every poor family in the land? Is it any wonder that the laboring men have been too much influenced by the *bad* examples so long before them? Let us be fair and calm, and face facts without flinching. Scoundrels and robbers among capitalists are exceptions, but these exceptions have wrought immeasurable harm to commercial and industrial life. Anarchists and incendiaries among workingmen are also exceptions, but these exceptions have immensely

damaged the just cause of labor, and are a constant menace to all the interests of society. Let us not forget that, as the majority of capitalists in our country are honest, fair-minded men, who wish to do right, so the great body of workingmen are neither outlaws nor enemies of the social order. Were our country in peril from a foreign foe, a million of them would spring to arms in a day for its defence. But workingmen have rights which they have been slow to perceive and to demand. They have faults and limitations, too, with which society must be patient. They are not represented by the red-handed ruffians who committed wholesale murder on the streets of Chicago last week. It would be the cruelest and most deplorable injustice to hold the great mass of our citizens and laborers responsible for that demoniac work.

Rights, then, attach not to conditions, but to men. What is needed first of all is mutual recognition and appreciation of common rights and common obligations.

(2) We must learn *the real oneness of human interests*. Experience has taught, at least is teaching, civilized nations that oppression of labor is disastrous to capital. A notable illustration of this is the economic influence of slavery. To-day the Southern States of our Republic are advancing in a career of industrial prosperity such as was unknown and impossible while slave labor was the only or the chief producing force. But every modification, every dilution, of the principle of slavery or villenage, works as a poison in the blood of the social organism. Capital is permanently safe and fruitful only when labor is its free and willing ally, only when the man who has muscles and mechanical skill works in fraternal accord, and for common ends, with the man who has dollars. On the other hand, oppression of capital is disastrous to labor. Wealth creates and multiplies opportunities for the workingman. The laborer who ignores the conditions which at one time or another limit the productiveness of wealth, and who demands for his labor more than a just participation in finan-

cial gains will admit, not only makes unjust exaction, but also he commits the blunder of killing the goose that lays his golden egg.

It is one of the lessons which all men need thoroughly to learn, that labor and capital are not natural foes, but friends. They cannot exist apart. They belong to one body, as head and hand, or as hand and foot.

Many capitalists as greatly need to learn this lesson as do many workingmen. The possession of wealth adds nothing to the sum total of a man's rights; nor does it lessen, but rather increases, his obligations. The want of wealth does not take from a man any rights any more than it relieves him of duties. Society is a unit. He who harms it is an enemy, whether he have one million dollars, or one dollar, or nothing. In the interest of all, robbery and lawlessness must be swiftly and effectually suppressed. In a sense, it is true that human rights are inalienable; but he who disregards the rights of others must be deprived of his power to work mischief. Society must lay a prompt restraining hand on the criminal, whether he be an ignorant Polish murderer in Milwaukee, or a well-fed alderman in New York city. A society that does not protect itself with even-handed justice is already leaning to its fall.

(3) We must learn afresh *the responsibilities of wealth and intelligence*. The New Testament principle, that the strong are to bear with the weak, to guide the ignorant, and to help the incompetent, expresses not only the highest morality, but also the thriftiest economy. The subtle, habitual enmity that to some degree exists between laborers and employers is a heritage from past generations. It is the faint, far echo of an old antagonism. In our country the social problem is rendered very complex by the fact that our people is not homogeneous. The body of workingmen is a mass of heterogeneous and incongruous elements. Innumerable foreigners come here who not only do not understand our institutions and laws, but who have positive and gross misconceptions

of them, which are fostered, if not produced, by unscrupulous immigrant agents. The chief peril of our country is the fact that it has long been a dumping-ground for European offal, as well as a home for honest European industry. The antagonisms between classes which exist in the old world have been imported into the new. America is inoculated with European virus, and is suffering in consequence. There is a question here for statesmen to deal with. The sentiment in favor of unlimited immigration is in danger of degenerating into a sentimentality that ignores great practical difficulties.

But aside from this aspect of the problem, we must consider the relation which the employer sustains to the employé under the Christian idea of life. In view of his power and intelligence, on the employer mainly rests the responsibility for the right adjustment and beneficent working of industrial relations. He is usually the wiser, and he must be a true teacher. He can most speedily affect custom, opinion and legislation. *Noblesse oblige*. If capitalists, instead of opposing organization among workingmen, would help workingmen to organize wisely; if they would, as some have done, seek to interest themselves in the mental and moral culture of their employés by providing them with practical teaching in morals, economics, politics and history; if they would drop out of sight the mere cash relation between themselves and their "hands," and habitually keep in mind the deeper relation of a common humanity,—much would be accomplished toward a complete settlement of labor troubles. Too often the employer has no immediate connection with his employés. The employer is often not a man, but a corporation, which administers its business through an agent who has no generous interest in the workmen, who buys labor just as he buys raw materials, and who ignores any obligation beyond that of paying a certain stipulated price for a stipulated amount of labor. Many employers have earnestly sought to deal with their men on a true Christian basis,

but they have been handicapped by the fact that the majority of employers contemplate the cash-relation as the only or chief relation between capital and labor. The prevalent habit to-day is for employés and employers to meet as antagonists instead of allies. The workingmen are wrong in many of their ideas and practices, but the employers are wrong too, and upon the latter, as the stronger and better informed, rests the duty of leading the way to conciliation and a true mutual understanding. The principle of arbitration has to some extent been adopted, but arbitration is only a temporary makeshift. The necessity of it is a confession of deep disorder. It is a step, however, in the right direction. But employers and employés must meet on the level of a common humanity—not as lord and serf, but as brother-men. Workingmen, under unwise or vicious leaders, have themselves made concession and conciliation difficult. The labor organizations have, in many cases, practised a usurpation that is iniquitous and intolerable. They have used immoral means to gain an end that may be right. They have been tyrannous to laborers as well as to capitalists. They have sometimes prejudiced their whole cause by folly and selfishness. Still the employer must take his position as the helper and teacher, under the Christian law that the strong shall serve the weak, even as the mighty God serves the weakest of His creatures. No true man can blink injustice or tolerate crime. Society must be inexorable in maintaining the sovereignty of law. But those who have intelligence and power should put both intelligence and power into the service of the many, that through the diffusion of intelligence and hearty good-will, sound judgment may come to all, and that the bond between labor and capital may become a bond of mutual regard and mutual help to common ends.

(4) Finally, *all men must learn that the only basis of a stable society is moral.* Injustice is weakness, by whomsoever practised. Crime of every sort is never an individual affair; it strikes at the

security of the whole people. When laboring men commit crime they damage their whole class, and they damage all society. Nothing is gained by violence or by fraud. Only in righteousness can there be peace. Boycotting is a dastardly infringement of individual rights. The destruction of wealth hurts the workingman at last more deeply than it does the employer. All loss is paid for by the many. The selfish organization cuts its own throat. Laborers and capitalists alike who use unlawful methods, inflict most deadly harm on themselves. The outlaw cuts the ground from under his own feet. The dynamiter is "hoist with his own petard." But that is not all; the assassin and incendiary is the foe of social order, and must be, will be, suppressed. There is no deliverance from real or imagined wrongs by the path of crime. The criminal "runs a gauntlet shot across by God and man at every inch," and he must fall. The stability and prosperity of society is more valuable than the interest of any man or any class, interpreted from the individual point of view. The moral sentiment gives efficiency to law, stability to commerce, and permanence to liberty. In the prevalence of the moral sentiment lies the security of the Republic. In the processes of law and in the suppression of crime, the might of the whole people moves to the realization of even-handed justice. The country is safe. Let no panic fears flutter the hearts of the people.

"God is still God, and
His truth shall not fail us."

We are prone to identify national prosperity with success in producing and accumulating wealth. The money-god has many worshippers, and this worship is not confined to the rich. We have all bowed down to the golden calf. But the strength of a nation is not in its money, but in its *men*. The temporary check to commercial prosperity which the present labor troubles cause, may be a disguised blessing. We shall, perhaps, think less of mere cash and more of principles. It is already discernible that

political economy is growing humane through the infusion of Christ's teachings. Thinkers and writers are coming to see more clearly than ever that the ideal of society, industrially and politically, as well as religiously, is the realization in all relations of Jesus' words, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." The precepts of the man of Nazareth will yet be the corner-stone of our constitution and laws, and the formative principle of our institutions. An ancient writer said, and it is the judgment of history, that "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Righteousness is inseparable from philanthropy—the love of man. That government is most just which is most humane. Law, liberty and love will yet be synonymous terms. Meantime let us lose neither courage nor faith. Providence is not based on contingencies. He who said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," is working to-day, casting a sword into the earth which will carve out an enduring peace. Let us be calm, and fair, and patient. Let us trust in God. And "with malice toward none and with charity for all, let us do the right as God gives us to see the right," and out of strife will come progress, out of turmoil will come "quietness and assurance forever." It is a time for stalwart Christian manhood to come to the front.

"God give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and hands;
Men whom the lust of [lucre] does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue,
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking;
For while the rabble with their thumb-worn creeds,
Their large professions and their little deeds,
Mingle in selfish strife, lo! Freedom weeps,
Wrong rules the land, and waiting justice sleeps."

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